

## Radford Cultural Heritage Park Announcement

□

**August 17, 2010**

□

□□□□□□□□ I am pleased to join you today at the Glencoe Museum to announce a significant step in our ongoing work to expand our region's tourism economy and a major step forward in the City of Radford's efforts to promote its heritage.

Today, I am pleased to announce that, at my urging, Norfolk Southern has agreed to donate a piece of property to the Radford Cultural Heritage Foundation for the construction of its new Cultural Heritage Site.

Southwest Virginia possesses not only the state's best outdoor experience, but also a rich and unique history and culture which visitors are just beginning to discover. The creation of new jobs for Southwest Virginia residents is my highest priority, and the promotion of our region's tourism economy is helping us achieve our economic development goals for the region. Sites that promote our region's history and heritage afford residents with new and greater economic opportunities including the creation and expansion of small, locally owned businesses to serve the increasing number of tourists who visit the area.

For this reason, I have been working with local officials throughout the Ninth Congressional District to aid in the effort to promote our region's unique natural and historical

assets.

In recent years, I have been working with the City of Radford in its ongoing efforts to develop its tourism economy. The City has a unique history and is an integral part of the Mary Draper Ingles story, one of the region's most widely recognized frontier stories. Mary Draper Ingles escaped captivity in 1755 and walked more than 700 miles to her home here in Southwest Virginia to solidify her place as one of our region's founding settlers. Additionally, Radford owes much of its early development to the rail industry's presence in the region.

To highlight the region's history, Radford officials and the Radford Heritage Foundation, which maintains the Glencoe Museum where we gather today, have planned a large park, the Radford Cultural Heritage Site, which will feature both the Town's ties to the Mary Draper Ingles story and its rail heritage.

Today's announcement of the donation of property from Norfolk Southern to the Radford Heritage Foundation will enable construction of the Radford Cultural Heritage Site. The property is more than 1.3 acres in size. When completed, the new park will include a large interpretive exhibit telling the Mary Draper Ingles story and the Town's role in that story of our region's founding.

In addition, a living history railroad exhibit will be constructed. The rail heritage exhibit will include signs relaying the railroad's development in Radford and the City's significance in rail history. A train viewing platform will be constructed that will provide a scenic and dramatic overlook of the active rail line here in Radford. Walking trails will connect these two exhibits and provide an opportunity for recreation.

In March 2009, the Virginia General Assembly designated the area in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands Virginia's Rail Heritage Region, and an effort has been launched throughout the region to promote rail tourism. Radford's Cultural Heritage Site will enable the City to become a part of this effort, drawing visitors interested in railroad history.

In addition, a broad effort has been launched throughout Southwest Virginia to capitalize on the region's unique cultural heritage. Heartwood, a large artisans' center, is currently under construction in Abingdon. In addition to promoting the region's artisans and skilled craftsmen,

Heartwood also has the goal of promoting the region's cultural heritage and frontier history.

Radford's new Cultural Heritage Site will be a key site in this effort, drawing visitors who are seeking historical and cultural information about our region's founding. The new site will also be an asset to schools, providing a real-life look at the region's history and serving as an outstanding educational tool.

The total cost of the new Cultural Heritage Site is estimated to be \$300,000. I am currently working with City officials to secure federal funds to assist with its construction. In addition, the Radford Heritage Foundation will launch a private fundraising effort for the additional funds.

The new Cultural Heritage Site will be a great asset for the City, and I am pleased that Norfolk Southern will be assisting in our efforts to promote the region's tourism economy.

I would like to thank Wick Moorman, CEO of Norfolk Southern, for his attention to my request that land be donated to the City for the Cultural Heritage Park and for his partnership in this effort.

I also want to thank Bruce Wingo, Vice President of Norfolk Southern for this region, who is with us today, and Jeff George and Lloyd Clingenpeel, who has now retired, for their efforts on behalf of the Cultural Heritage Site.

I also would like to thank Annyce Levy, Chair of the Radford Heritage Foundation, and the other members of the Heritage Foundation Board for their excellent efforts on this project.

The Bring Mary Home Committee also deserves our recognition today for their efforts to highlight Mary Draper Ingles history throughout the region.

The Radford City Council and City Manager David Ridpath deserve our appreciation

today for their outstanding efforts in economic development for the City of Radford.

The new Cultural Heritage Site is sure to become one of the region's most interesting historical and cultural assets, and I look forward to my continued work with the Radford Heritage Foundation and City officials to construct the new Cultural Heritage Site.